

An Historical Look at Resource Sharing

BASIL STUART-STUBBS

IN 1634 A FRENCH humanist, Nicolas Claude Fabri de Peiresc, attempted to arrange for the interlibrary lending of manuscripts between the Royal Library in Paris and the Vatican and Barberini libraries in Rome.¹ He failed. It was a portentous beginning.

After two centuries of industrial and political revolutions, interlibrary loan was still a concept rather than a practice until one day, on September 4, 1876, the Librarian of the Worcester Public Library in Massachusetts penned a letter to the editor of the new *Library Journal*. The librarian was Samuel Swett Green, a native of Worcester, a Harvard graduate, and a minister by training. Just one month later, at the first meeting of the American Library Association in Philadelphia, he would deliver a paper on personal relations between librarians and readers² and thereby establish the philosophical ground on which reference service has been based ever since. But in September he was unwittingly founding something else.

"It would add greatly to the usefulness of our reference libraries," he wrote, "if an agreement should be made to lend books to each other for short periods of time. . . . I should think libraries would be willing to make themselves responsible for the value of borrowed books, and be willing to pay an amount of expressage that would make the transportation company liable for the loss in money should the books disappear in transit. . . . Reference libraries, it is true, all have exceptionally valuable books that they would not be willing to lend."³ In making this proposal, Green introduced some notions that were later to be codified: first, that the borrowing library should be responsible for both the cost of items lost and the cost of transportation, and second, that some types of material would not be available through interlibrary loan.

Green's suggestion appears to have been ignored. Worse, it was forgotten. In 1892, the *Library Journal* printed another letter on the

Basil Stuart-Stubbs is University Librarian, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C., Canada.

subject, this one from Bunford Samuel of the Ridgway Library in Philadelphia. "Some hesitation must be felt in developing a new idea," he began modestly. "But why should not libraries enter into an agreement in virtue of which books may be furnished by any institution, a party to said agreement (of course under its own rules as to loaning books), upon request through another, for use within (or for loan by) the latter?" Sketching out the arrangements, he suggests that, "The institution making request guarantees safe return of book and at the same time protects itself by agreement with individual on whose behalf book is borrowed; and the latter pays cost of transmission, etc., and any charge that the requisitioned institution is accustomed to make for use of its books, or that may be otherwise agreed upon. . . . Rarities, etc., could be reserved from the operation of the agreement."⁴

The editor coldly replied that: "The lending of books between American libraries is not unexampled. Harvard College Library and the Boston Athenaeum have often been drawn upon in that way. The tacit agreement is that outlined above; but we do not know of any case in which a written agreement has been made."⁵

Bunford Samuel, having absorbed the editor's comment, wrote again: "Will you permit me a line further in explanation? My proposal looked to a general union of the various libraries of the country—or at least the more important ones—in the agreement proposed. Such an agreement would not, as it seems to me, be necessarily in writing. But a mutual understanding on the subject would, of course, be necessary among the institutions concerned, such as I do not think at present exists."⁶

Samuel did not go so far as to advocate an interlibrary loan code, but the idea was gestating. Responding to Samuel's first letter, Green broke sixteen years of silence on the subject to point out that a written agreement was necessary when books were borrowed from the National Medical Library, and that the agreement stipulated the duration of the loan, means of shipment, and payment of charges by the borrowing library.⁷

Any interlibrary lending that was taking place appears to have been local. However, the National Medical Library had already initiated a direct mail service, and this was cited by an editorialist in the *Boston Post* as an example to be followed:

There seems to be no good reason why the system of circulating libraries should not be extended beyond its present limits. The National Medical Library, at Washington, one of the best in the

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world, is a circulating library. Books are sent to anyone who deposits \$50 as security. . . . Why should not the Congressional Library, which is a national library in name, be made one in fact, and packages of books be sent out, under certain guarantees, to poorly equipped libraries, or to societies or associations that might apply?⁸

The writer did not get his wish; the Library of Congress is still Congress's library, and will only lend books which cannot be supplied by any other library.

Other libraries were volunteering their collections by mail, thus becoming the precursors of "the resource center." One example was the Boston Public Library, which loaned books to other libraries in New England during the 1890s. A special form was printed and made available to borrowing libraries. Some thought had been given to the conditions put upon the process, conditions which were to be spelled out in future codes:

1. The book asked for must be one out of the ordinary course—not such as it is the ordinary duty of the applicant library to supply;
2. It must be required for purposes of serious research;
3. It must be a book which may, without injury, be sent by express;
4. It must be a book which may be spared, for the time being, without inconvenience to our local readers.⁹

On the other side of the continent, the Librarian of the University of California, Joseph C. Rowell, noted that "the growing demands of scholars, incapable of satisfaction by any one library, and the economical management of library finances, unitedly prompt a closer relation, a vital union, between the larger libraries of our country." To this end, he announced his willingness to enter into an agreement with any libraries in the United States "which are willing reciprocally to loan books to the University of California Library."¹⁰ His conditions were roughly identical to those stipulated by the Boston Public Library, but he added a requirement that receipt of a book by either the borrower or the lender should be promptly acknowledged.

These two initiatives were noted by the Cooperation Committee of the ALA, which reported on them briefly on July 5th, 1898, at the Chautauqua Conference. The Chairman, Clement W. Andrews of the John Crerar Library, hinted that the committee had something special up its communal sleeve regarding interlibrary loan, but had been frustrated: "The council has forestalled a proposition which the

committee intended to make by placing the subject in the program of the College and Reference Section."¹¹

But perhaps that was not a bad thing. Green's idea was now twenty-two years old, and was being taken up in a piecemeal fashion by individual libraries. And while Green was not a member of the Cooperation Committee, he was a member of the College and Reference Section. Although absent from the conference, he was nevertheless present in word. At nine o'clock Thursday evening, July 7th, A.S. Root, Librarian of Oberlin College, read to the closing session of the College and Reference Section a paper by Green,¹² which began in a tone of resignation: "Twenty-one or 22 years ago I sent a communication to the first number of the *Library Journal* to awaken an interest in inter-library loans. Today, after having, as a librarian, borrowed books from other libraries and lent books to other libraries for 20 years, and having done so extensively, I am again to present the subject to librarians."¹³ He told of his experiences with other libraries, and spoke of the advantages of interlibrary loans to patrons. Then: "I am decidedly of the opinion that the plan of inter-lending has not yet been carried anywhere so far as to become a nuisance. . . . I am of the opinion that the system of library inter-lending should be more widely extended, and that small libraries should lend to one another, as well as the smaller libraires borrowing from larger ones."¹⁴

In this last remark, he foresaw that there could be problems for net lenders in an expanded system of interlibrary loans. "But is not the plan of inter-lending a one-sided affair? Do not the large libraries do favors without return?"¹⁴

His answer to this rhetorical question, as his concluding statement on the subject, was not one that would satisfy today's net lending libraries: "I feel very sure, however, that college and city libraries, in the long run, will find substantial returns for kindnesses rendered to investigators in small places through libraries, resulting from the kind feelings engendered by generosity among persons of small means, perhaps, but of large influence."¹⁴

Meanwhile, Ernest C. Richardson, the Librarian of Princeton University, was dwelling on the problem of how to rationalize collections and save a little money in the process. He had a solution which he presented at the Tri-State Library Meeting in Atlantic City on March 17, 1899. He called his solution "a lending library for libraries," and suggested that this might be the Library of Congress, or an independent organization. Speaking of his proposed national lending library (his term), he said that it would lead to the "direct

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encouragement of scientific research, a very large national economy in removing unnecessary duplication of purchases, and an improvement of existing libraries, in removing the strain of competition and of effort to cover the whole ground."¹⁵ It was such a good idea that it is still being discussed seventy-five years later.

Following Richardson's remarks, a Mr. Warrington introduced the notion that inexpensive copies of extracts from books could be substituted for the original. For the moment, nothing came of this idea.

As it happened, Richardson was in that year the chairman of the ALA's College and Reference Section, and he took the opportunity of placing himself on the program at the Atlanta conference to deliver a paper on cooperation in lending among libraries.¹⁶ Richardson pointed out that there were three impediments to research in America: (1) many works were not to be found in North American libraries, (2) there were difficulties in locating titles held in libraries, and (3) traveling to libraries was expensive. He proposed ways of eliminating these impediments under four headings: cataloging, purchasing, specialization and lending. In effect, he called for the development of union catalogs, for the rationalization of collections and the adoption "of some practical scheme whereby, without hardship to the larger libraries, the great expense of travelling to books may be eliminated, so far as American libraries are concerned, by sending books from one library to another."¹⁷

In preparing his paper, Richardson had methodically checked the holdings of American libraries against Bolton's *Catalogue of Scientific Periodicals*. He found that of the 8,600 titles listed, only 3,160 were held in American libraries. Acknowledging that of the balance some would be of "secondary value," nevertheless he maintained that all should be available somewhere. But he foresaw difficulties if the work were left to libraries in general. "Shall five hundred colleges continue in an indiscriminate way to struggle towards an ideal 8,600 periodicals, all of which some one will want some time, but not one in 20 of which some of them will want once in 20 years, or shall we look forward to some sort of definite cooperation, and the sooner the better?"¹⁸

He roughly calculated the waste of \$250,000,000 through "the present go-as-you-please every-one-for-himself principle. We are duplicating every year a great many sets of periodicals, as we would not need to do under some system where all were free to borrow."¹⁸

Then he proposed his grand idea again: "Now, the ideal way of meeting this situation both for economy and for convenience is undoubtedly a central, national, lending library of the least frequently

needed books—a library having, perhaps, a central library in Washington with branches in New Orleans, San Francisco, Chicago and New York.”¹⁹

But Richardson was a practical man and saw—very correctly as it turned out—that it might take several years to develop a national lending library. Until that happy day arrived, cooperation was to be the answer. “Cooperation in specialization and co-operation in cataloguing will at least receive an immense new impetus, while co-operation in purchasing will logically and inevitably follow in the basis of the co-operative work in cataloguing. In a practical age, in a practical land, with the example of great combinations for personal gain before us, it ought to be possible to devise suitable machinery and secure extensive adopting of this machinery.”¹⁹ He raised the shades of computer-based processing and the problems of standardization. He suggested that Bolton’s list might be used to develop a union list of locations, to serve both as a location and an acquisition tool.

In concluding, he brought up two new issues. “In the dim futurity, perhaps, a paternal government may step in and help the matter by lightening still farther the expense of sending such books by mail.”²⁰ Thus he foresaw the desirability of external subsidization of the interlibrary loan process. He also foresaw possible objections from another direction. “For the benefit of those members of our association who look at the matter from the standpoint of the dealer, let me say that this need in no wise reduce the business or the profits of the book dealers. American libraries, for a long time to come, are going to use with eagerness every dollar they can get for the purchase of books.”²⁰

In anything librarians undertake, time has a way of slipping by, and six years elapsed before anyone paid much attention, in print, to the question of interlibrary loans. Then Richardson, this time speaking in Portland, Oregon as the President of ALA, called again for “co-operation in purchase and distribution,” “cheapening of the postal rates” and the development of “co-operative lists.”²¹ As is often the case, the conference then went on to consider almost everything except the urgings of the president.

Somewhat grudgingly, the Librarian of Congress, Herbert Putnam, produced a policy governing interlibrary loans. It fell far short of hopes. “The duty of the National Library,” he said, “is to aid the unusual need with the unusual book.” The policy is couched in negatives: loans were to be for purposes of “serious research” only; loans would not be made of books “that should be in a local library” or “which [are] in constant use in Washington.” Genealogies and local

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histories were not to be loaned, and "only for very serious research can the privilege be extended to include volumes of periodicals."²²

Since his appointment at McGill University, Charles H. Gould had regularly attended meetings of the American Library Association, an organization of which he would become president in 1909. He had followed general developments in librarianship closely, and had introduced a number of then-revolutionary practices at McGill, such as small "traveling" libraries. In 1908, he submitted an article to the *Library Journal* in which he put forth his ideas on what he called "regional" libraries. Echoing Richardson's sentiments, he asked:

Is the immense total energy now expended on the libraries of this country being so applied as to produce the best possible results? Is there anywhere unnecessary and, therefore, unproductive and wasteful duplication of effort or of expenditure? Has not library development on this continent now reached a stage at which more thorough co-operation and co-ordination, perhaps, at times, even a certain degree of judicious concentration, would lead to results larger and more satisfactory than those which are now achieved? In fine, the library world has hitherto been occupied with the evolution of single libraries. Is not the twentieth century to see the welding of all these separate entities into one complete system?²³

Gould hadn't used the word, but he was talking about a network. He parted company with Richardson and others who called for the creation of a single national lending library.

Let us suppose the whole continent to be divided into a few great regions, or districts, and that in each, after careful consultation and due consideration, a truly great library is developed out of existing resources, or is established *de novo*. Each of these regional libraries would serve as a reservoir upon which all the libraries of its district might freely draw. They would co-operate unrestrictedly with each other in matters of exchange, loan, purchase of rare or particularly costly works. . . . It would seem equally reasonable that they should act as clearing houses and on this account, as well as because of their size, they would materially help to dispose of, if they did not completely solve the vexed question as to storage of so-called "dead" books.²³

How should these regional libraries come into being? Here, Gould begged off. "I say nothing as to the means to be adopted for maintaining them. Yet the difficulties on this score, though not slight,

do not appear to be by any means insuperable."²³ He was too optimistic, apparently. In 1975 the identical concept is still being urged.

Gould's remarks appeared in the June 1908 issue of *Library Journal*. On the twenty-third day of that same month, the Librarian of Harvard University, William Coolidge Lane, spoke at the dedication of the new library building at Oberlin College. His topic: a central bureau of information and loan collection for college libraries, which turned out to be a more detailed description of the kind of facility Gould had in mind. Lane's opening sentence struck a familiar chord. "Co-operation in acquisition, in record, in use, and perhaps in storage, is the problem with which we have to grapple."²⁴ He then proceeded to describe the functions of a central bureau. "As a Bureau of information, its first task will be to collect whatever records already exist relating to the books in other libraries." This could be done, he said, by obtaining all available catalog cards and book catalogs. "The next step will be to obtain information from libraries supplementary to that already in print in catalogs and reports."²⁵ He saw this as being accomplished by a number of bureau "agents," "prepared to take notes systematically of what they find." Nevertheless, he was edging toward the concept of a national union catalog.

Assuming a location record to have been created, "another important duty will be to become familiar with the conditions and the rules of the principal libraries that can be depended upon for lending. . . . It might be in addition a Lending Bureau, itself arranging loans, especially from libraries in its own vicinity, to those at a distance. . . . If in addition it is to be itself a library, lending its own books as well as those of others, its usefulness will be correspondingly increased, and its endowment must be strengthened in proportion."²⁶

In considering the nature of the bureau's collection, Lane showed an understanding of the ways in which scholars use libraries.

The Library would not attempt to accumulate masses of material in regard to special topics . . . I mean books which must be used, so to speak, *en masse*, books which are not asked for one by one from previous knowledge of them, but books which the student must run through more or less thoroughly one after the other in patient search for the facts which interest him. Such books can only be used on the spot and together, and their collection is the duty of the college libraries themselves. The central library should only collect such books as the student is naturally referred to by bibliographies and other guides; such books as he knows in advance that he wants, but

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cannot find. . . . The works of this kind which first occur to the mind are sets of periodicals and society transactions, collections of historical documents and sources.²⁷

Thus Lane agreed with his colleague Richardson at Princeton. Lane's closing remarks could easily have been uttered by Richardson: "I am confident that the full plan, worked out in complete detail, under the advice of an interested and progressive committee, and adequately endowed, would be of the highest service to American scholars, and would lead to a substantial modification of the book-buying policy of college and reference libraries in general. Its whole tendency would be to bring about a closer union and a better understanding among libraries which have much to gain from working together."²⁸

Then, in 1909, it was Charles Gould's turn. In that year he had become the first Canadian president of the American Library Association, and like his predecessors in that office, he took the opportunity to stress the importance of co-ordination in cooperation. Harking back to his article on regional libraries, he suggested that with the turn of the century, libraries had entered a new era. "The problems which now confront us are different from the earlier ones. They no longer have to do with libraries as *final* terms in a series, but as first terms in a new series of larger proportions. The twentieth century has the task of evoking method and order *among* rather than *within* libraries. It must discover a classification not for the volumes on the shelves . . . but for the libraries themselves, grading them as it were, and welding them into a complete system."²⁹ Pressing his point, he carried on: "I point you to the fact that combination and organization are among the strongest tendencies, the very watchwords of the age. How should librarians, then, keep aloof from them? I point you also to the trend of library opinion as evinced in recent professional literature. . . . A system such as has been mentioned . . . would dispose of most of the questions that are now pressing on us for solution."³⁰

But Gould was already beginning to understand the singular quality of librarians. In beginning a survey of cooperation up to 1909, he commented: "your sufferings on account of it would be short. For, though a good deal has lately been written on the subject, it would not take many minutes to tell what has actually been done."³¹ He added:

Let us now look at one particular aspect, as it relates to the supply and distribution of books. This is, perhaps the ultimate and crowning purpose of co-ordination. . . . Though inter-library

loans have been going on for years, and have now grown very usual, they are still effected chiefly between the greater libraries; while the books lent are restricted, in the main, to those needed for serious study or research. . . . In any system which may be devised, there must be provision for widening the scope of inter-library loans, until they include other than scholarly works. We all of us have a great respect for the scholar, but his are not the only interests to consider.³²

After speaking about the need for including medium and small libraries in his proposed system, he reintroduced his concept of "regional" libraries:

Might it not then be feasible to provide a certain number of book reservoirs to which all the libraries of a particular district or locality could turn in time of need? These reservoirs, existing for the express purpose of serving other libraries, might have great latitude in the matter of lending, while at the same time they might combine the function of a storage warehouse and clearinghouse with other services as yet hardly spoken of. . . . Suppose the entire continent has been laid off into a few such districts or regions, and that in each region there has been established a great reservoir—let us call it a regional library—placed at a central point which has been selected after a careful study of the region, its lines of communication, distribution and character of its population, the size and location of its other libraries, with the kind and number of books these already possess. The regional library may have been developed from an existing library . . . or even from a group of libraries, or it may have been established *de novo*, examination having shown the necessity for it.³³

Gould saw the system developing by blocks. First, the regional libraries would establish lines of communication with all libraries within their respective areas; then, links would be created among the regions, and with the national libraries. The regional libraries might also establish branch libraries and "call into requisition all the most approved means of distribution, from travelling libraries to book wagons." Among the regional libraries, some kind of rationalization would be attempted: "Though each Reservoir Library would necessarily aim at a large and comprehensive collection, each would specialize to the exclusion of all others, in certain directions. . . . They would constitute the natural storage libraries of their district, receiving and making accessible the overflow, whatever its nature, of their

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affiliated libraries. . . . Thus in addition to being storage libraries they would almost inevitably become clearinghouses."³⁴

Then Gould took another giant leap. "As a matter of course, regional libraries would also become *the* reference libraries of their district. . . . They would be equipped with correspondence research departments, and bibliographic bureaux from which would issue, at reasonable tariff rates, certified copies of articles, answers to specific requests for information, or even for more extended bits of research."³⁵ He added: "Canada seems to be ideally placed for making an initial experiment of this nature."³⁶ The experiment still waits to be performed.

In the discussion that ensued, Richard Rogers Bowker, the editor of the *Library Journal*, rose to speak: "Mr. President, like 'le bourgeois gentilhomme' of Molière, who really had been talking prose all his life without knowing it, we have really been discussing co-ordination for a great many years without knowing it by that name. . . . I wish to suggest, Sir, that the Executive board could do nothing better during the coming year than to appoint a committee of weight and importance to deal with this question."³⁷ A committee on coordination was established, with Gould as its chairman; one of its members was William C. Lane of Harvard, who also served as chairman of a separate committee on co-ordination among college libraries.

Later in his remarks, Bowker brought up the matter of a union catalog again: "We should develop some system that will enable a library first of all to know where a book ought to be found, and secondly, if there is no special place for it, some means of asking who has it."³⁸

Later that year the superintendent of the reading room at the Library of Congress, William Warner Bishop, decided it was time to take a position on behalf of his institution. He had some questions of his own to raise about interlibrary loan. "What is its present status? To what extent are our libraries borrowing books from one another? What, also, is the theory in which the practice finds its justification?"³⁹

As for numbers, Bishop bemoaned the fact that: "the actual number of books lent and sought by libraries is not easily ascertained. There exists no compilation of statistics on the topic so far as I am aware."³⁹ The situation is no different today, unfortunately. But Bishop did have statistics of loans from the Library of Congress. In 1909 1,023 volumes were loaned to 119 libraries; forty-nine academic libraries accounted for 521 loans, and forty-four public libraries for 244 loans. The library

was unable to fill 357 requests which it had received, principally because the items were not in the collection.

After reviewing the Library of Congress's regulations, as they had been laid down by Putnam, Bishop then drew the attention of his readers to an aspect of the interlibrary loan process which was being overlooked. "The inter-library loan is an expensive process . . . one wonders whether the time spent in borrowing and lending between libraries does not represent in money value a good many times the value of the book lent. . . . In all this reckoning nothing has been said of the cost of carriage, which is frequently excessive."⁴⁰

Then he moved to the attack:

Last spring the librarians of Harvard set forth in new form and with great force a plea for a central storage library and bureau of information for college libraries. . . . But now I desire to submit a few points in opposition to any such scheme for a lending library organized under the American Library Association. In the first place, the national library already lends very freely, and is prepared to continue this policy. . . . On the lending side there seems already in hand and in operation the necessary machinery in connection with the largest collection of books in the country.⁴¹

He went on to point out that "the beginnings" of a central bureau of information were also at the Library of Congress, in a collection of printed catalogs of American libraries, and in a file of printed cards submitted by a number of major libraries. He pointed out that the library conducted reference service by mail and concluded by asking: "If then the Library of Congress will try to do these things for individuals and for libraries, it is not on the way toward becoming a national lending library and bureau of information—for libraries?"⁴² Perhaps Bishop's article succeeded in diverting or delaying the efforts of librarians to carry out some of the proposals of Lane, Richardson and Gould. In any case, the Library of Congress did not completely fulfill the role Bishop proposed for it.

For his part, Bowker decided to test the opinion of librarians on the matter of coordination, and as editor of *Library Journal* created another milestone: he distributed the first questionnaire on interlibrary loan. There were only six questions:

1. What are the classes of demand within the library for books which it cannot supply?
2. How far are these demands filled by the extension of these methods and to what extent; is it undesirable to fill them?

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3. Would a uniform blank for requesting interlibrary loan, that could be sent successively to different libraries until the book should be found be desirable for general use throughout the country?
4. Does the plan of a central lending library seem preferable to the development of the present facilities of the national library, the assignment of regional functions to important libraries in the several sections and the use of special university libraries?
5. Is the present cost of the inter-loan system prohibitive in many instances? And how can this difficulty be obviated?
6. How can the small libraries be of use to the large libraries in coordination?⁴³

The results of the survey were reported in the March and May 1910 issues of *Library Journal*, under the title "Symposium on Coordination or Affiliation of Libraries," and Bowker provided a summary of the results in the form of an editorial:

Inter-library loan . . . represents a decided economic advantage in library administration. It is evident that the demand of inter-library loans is and should be confined to a few classes of books or to individual books so rare that only a few libraries have or can have them. . . . It is not wise to cumber the shelves in any library with books seldom called for, provided they can be borrowed elsewhere when required, or to use funds for costly books outside the usual field of the library.

The trend of library opinion . . . is evidently toward the development of the inter-library loan system by the Library of Congress and other existing libraries, rather than in the establishment of a reservoir or other new forms of libraries for the special purpose.

The limitations to library-loan development are practically those of dollars and cents, both to the library loaning and to the user borrowing. . . . With the ultimate development of the system the larger libraries, supplying wider demands, will have to meet the question of cost. . . . Of course this question may be partly met by a fee charged to the individual borrower, but the use of the library loan system is unduly limited now because of the considerable cost of transportation which the individual borrower must pay.⁴⁴

The question of cost is still with us.

That summer, Charles Gould presented the report of the committee on coordination to the Mackinac Island Conference of the ALA. He

had been impressed by a report on the activities of European libraries, delivered at the International Conference of Bibliography and Documentation in Brussels in 1909. There he had found described a situation in Norway which greatly appealed to him: "All libraries subsidised by the State are considered members of one vast body, the parts of a network which extends over the whole country and through which the books circulate. The purchasing and cataloguing of books, and the registration of borrowers are all performed in one central office."⁴⁵

The committee had discussed the possible adaptation of European models to the American situation, and noted that:

The national library and other important libraries are steadily extending more and greater privileges to sister institutions less fortunate than themselves, and are placing their resources more and more completely at the disposal of others. The service of a Bureau of bibliographic information for the country as a whole, undertaken several years ago by the national library, is being rapidly developed; and within the past few months the same library has issued a tentative statement of the conditions under which it will print copy furnished by libraries outside the District of Columbia.⁴⁶

The committee had two recommendations to make. One dealt with a system of "inter-library readers' cards," but the second was of greater significance: "That certain libraries, which are now lending, or are willing to lend to others, adopt uniform rules for lending . . . and that the rules thus adopted be printed and circulated with the addition of the names of the libraries that have adopted them."⁴⁶ The move toward a code had begun.

The year 1910 is an appropriate point at which to conclude this review of early schemes for the sharing and rationalization of library resources. If the word *network* wasn't prominent in the vocabulary of our pioneers, the concept was there. In fact, although the centennial of Samuel Swett Green's proposal for interlibrary lending will be celebrated next year, and although the dimensions of cooperation among libraries have increased enormously, there have been few intellectual innovations in the interim years. Wherever the spirits of our predecessors now abide, they must be waiting for the realization of their ancient hopes.

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